



Voluntary Sector & Development

Diaspora and the Emerging Challenges in India's Social Development – Role of Pravasi Bharatiyas

**Address by Ms Ela Bhatt,
Founder and General Secretary, SEWA**

Welcome to all of you. I am Ela Bhatt. I am also from Viswa Bharati. I am a local Indian. I have been the founder and have been heading SEWA which is a labour union called Self-Employed Women's Association. I am based in Ahmedabad. You know the subject of today. Let me very briefly introduce the subject in my way. Since we are talking about voluntary sector, voluntary sector plays and has played and will play in the 21st century various roles - for example, as a public service contractor, in return for a fee, doing a better job, etc. Various roles are being played. But by way of opening remarks, let me propose that we start preparing to move ahead from building voluntary sector to voluntary spirit in India and in this the Pravasi Bharatiyas, if you call them Viswa Bharatis, augment the efforts in this direction. That is my first point.

As I said, the voluntary sector has played an active and important role in India's freedom struggle. The political independence was made possible with the struggles and constructive work of voluntary sector. After Independence in 1947, the voluntary sector has grown and expanded in influencing the mainstream economic and social development. But now things have changed. Non-government organizations are promoted by the government agencies on the one side and not-for-profit corporations are being launched by corporate bodies. I must say that it is time to dispense with the organized voluntary sector as a sector. It is time to move into the bastions of the State, the capital by spreading voluntary spirit. In other words, the voluntary sector must transform from a sector into a way of relating, into a way of linking and a way of building partnership between the State, capital and the civil society.

These three relate to each other not only through social contract of rights and responsibilities, but in a voluntary spirit. This appears to me the future of voluntary sector in India because there is a rise of the virtual State, State power that cuts across several national boundaries, political ideologies and interests, military powers and economic territories. You know this in one form or the other. The voluntary spirit is the selfless consideration for others. I do not have to define it. It has the growing elements of mutuality and cooperation with the disadvantaged, excluded and the poor remain in the centre. The voluntary spirit is in the service of their way. I am not saying anything new. Since this is the age-old Sanskar. Yet, at this point in time, we will take up as renewed objectives for moving ahead from building voluntary sector to spreading voluntary spirit.

With these opening remarks, let me say that I have the privilege and honour to chair this session and introduce our speakers and panellists. It is embarrassing to introduce the former Prime Minister. I did not have anything directly to do with politics. But, however, personally I always knew him as a writer, as a thinker and I always have seen him and realized him as a non-political person. I do not know whether I am introducing him correctly or not. Sir, you are very dear to us also as an author, a thinker and you know the Indians abroad in the right spirit.

I am happy to introduce Mr Priya Viswanath. I will also introduce Mr Pradeep Kashyap. The time is very brief. Smt Priya Viswanath has a long experience in the world of

publication and consultancy on current topics. I may say that she can be introduced as a person with expertise and is very knowledgeable on the issue of diaspora and philanthropy. The other person is Mr Pradeep Kashyap. He is basically a banker. He has been all through 30 years in the banking profession, formal banking. For a few years, he has now taken up the field of philanthropy. He is now full-time engaged in philanthropy. He is the Executive Director of American-Indian Foundation. Last but not the least, let me introduce Mr Dalpat Rathod. He is a graduate of science and he is basically an activist. He has the background of business, but I would call him an activist and I have requested him to write his own autobiography because his life is full of turmoil – ups and downs – many ups as well.

We are privileged to have such distinguished panellists on this session. May I now request Hon'ble Mr I K Gujral, former Prime Minister, to give us the Keynote Address today. Thank you.

Keynote Address by Mr I K Gujral, Former Prime Minister of India

Thank you, Elaji, for the very kind words. Distinguished panellists, may I first welcome you all here. I know I cannot improve upon what the Prime Minister said yesterday in his poetic form to welcome you. I only join my voice with him. It is a great thing for us that all of you are here from various parts of the world and we are trying to understand each other, get closer to each other, identify various areas where we can cooperate.

I must say that we will repeat what the Prime Minister has already said, we are indeed proud of you. This nation feels proud of you because each one of you is a story of success and whatever you have done – we feel very happy and satisfied. I must also say that the Indian diaspora is a very broad definition. Some six countries have been identified by the Prime Minister for some facilities – whatever we can offer. This morning, there was another seminar. I was glad to associate with it. A very leading thinker and a scholar from Bangladesh was speaking. He said we are also part of the diaspora. It was good for me to listen to him. He said – after all the largest diaspora of India is in South Asia. These are the seven States, but we are all the same people. We share languages, we share culture. There is no language of South Asia which is not spoken in one part or the other of India. Take Bengali, Punjabi, etc. any language and it is there. He said this and was pointing on it. "This is what I want to share with you that we are your neighbours, but we may be your poor neighbours. That is why, perhaps, you are not taking most of us."

Well, I felt embarrassed. I am saying here not to repeat what he said but I am saying this in a different sense that the Indian diaspora in the part of the world that you stay, and mostly in the West, you have made a place for yourselves. You have put us on the map of the world. There is another part of the diaspora which is in the Gulf. They are the largest contributors so far of foreign exchange inside and they are the largest group of people who stay there, in the entire Gulf put together. As a matter of fact, the diaspora in the Gulf brings us always closer to the world crises. Whenever something happens in Iraq or when there is something happening in Central Asia, we get worried.

In the 1990 crisis, I was Foreign Minister at that time. We had to evacuate 2,00,000 people from Kuwait and Iraq only. Fortunately, we were able to do it in time. But, that apart, the main point is that voluntary, as a movement, nobody could have defined to us better than Gandhiji. He was, perhaps, in our concept, the author of this idea. But there are a few things which we can share with him in the West and some discrepancies are there in South Asia. You are living in a society which is modern, with all its problems. I am not talking of economy; I am talking of social life. You are living in a society where the joint families have now atomized, if I am not using the word in other



sense. We are in the process of harmonization. Harmonization is also creating some dispersal problems for us. We also want to understand from you the management of environment.

As you know, in India and you would have seen in Delhi, and again I see a degree of embarrassment, we try to be very hospitable, but we have not been able to clean up the environment. Therefore, you must have kept quiet on seeing our habitat. But we feel embarrassed. How do you do it? Can it be done by the municipalities alone? Can it be done by the government alone? All of us have to look into it. The more serious problem is that unless all of us unite it cannot be done.

I remember, it was in 1971, when the first Environment Conference was held in Sweden. I was also a Minister at that time. Therefore, I had the privilege of attending it. And then the spellings of environment, if we heard it for the first time, were then and till then it was new because we had not faced those problems. But subsequently, whenever we visited we saw how towns have been cleaned. When I went in the earlier days after the War to London, I saw every building with black. We never saw fish in the tank. You have to know how much of voluntary effort which we made so that our rivers are clean, so that our environment improves. But I knew the governments alone cannot do it. We are also, at the moment, concerned with another issue and that is the issue regarding what we have already done, is about people. Diverse people are pooling. The Indian diaspora is a broad definition.

Many of you have gone from areas from which I come from. Some of you speak Tamil. How many of us co-live together? How do you correlate amongst yourselves? Why do we correlate? Here comes in the voluntary effort. Co-living is necessary. We have chosen a word for it. We call it secularism. But you have to tell us – how do you correlate your different diversities and yet create a new chapter in life? I was in Hyderabad the other day and I was talking to some friends who had come from America then the Muslim Association. I asked them two questions and I want to share that with you. I asked them – “Look, you live there; you are diverse people; and you have different religions, you have carried them from here; you are proud of them. Do you call it secularism? What do you call it? Why are there no riots amongst the Spanish-speaking people and the English-speaking people? Why are there no riots between the Catholics and the Protestants? Why do we have them?” This is something in which our voluntary cooperation can help us in improving our psyche.

I asked them one more question which is of interest. Since I was talking to a Muslim audience from America, I said – “I notice many Muslims have beard longer than mine but you do not send your children to Madrasas. Where do you send them? To Harvard? Why don't you send them to Madrasas?” Again, I want to tell before you. We want to learn from you the social challenges that a society faces. India is in the process of transformation. Our transformation is at different levels. We are ancient in some parts and some families have already become modern. Some of us were still not yet there. Also, this has given two outlooks to our people – something that modernity is a part of growth and something else is there. We were very great 5,000 years ago, so they say, we should go back to it. I have to learn from you. Which is the better way? Should we stay as a medieval nation, or should we become a modern nation? By modernity, I do not mean Westernization. I mean scientific.

Since most of you are involved in scientific temper-making, how do we do it? How do we learn from you? I am very keen that when you are interacting with us collectively or individually, you will kindly let us know how does a nation or a group of people, who are first-generation migrants, they have gone there and changed their attitudes, social attitudes, individual attitudes and also created a society which is modern. We want to learn from that. That also, again, is on a voluntary basis.

I am also clear that we should understand and adhere to the wide and broader diversities that are here in the diaspora. There are many problems which we cannot singly solve. For instance, the problem of women trafficking. Most of the girls, as you know, are kidnapped from Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh and marketed here. We have to curb this by cooperation. Since cooperation can be done only on a voluntary basis, how do we do? This is something which we will have to discuss amongst ourselves. We should also discuss amongst ourselves – some steps Government can take and should take, all governments like stopping this or policing – but more importantly social consciousness is needed and that is where volunteerism again comes in.

Another problem that we are confronted with again on the social level, is child labour. It is a dimension of poverty, of course. But it is also a trans-border problem because the parents who legally or illegally come to our country, they have children also. Poverty plus children plus migration create similar type of social issues in our society and the society from which they have come. How to deal with it without cooperation? We cannot. Therefore, this is another diaspora that I was talking of – South-Eastern diaspora where there is a need to cooperate. Therefore, that diaspora is very important from this point of view.

This is also another issue and that is illiteracy. Fortunately, we have taken a vow in this country that we will try to eradicate illiteracy by, say, about five or seven years from now. The educated society will try its best to remove illiteracy in the country. I hope so. Of course, it is very difficult to make a categorical statement even in the western society. But, anyhow, we are on the move towards that. Now, there again volunteerism comes. What is right to know is ideas. We are not seeking money in this. We are not seeking investment. If new ideas or methodologies particularly with the help of television and with the help of new knowledge that has come in, share with us. That is why, I think, again I go back to the women empowerment. Is it possible to have a modern nation without empowerment of women? You live in societies. We will learn from you. How did you do it? How did your host countries do it? Why is it that we are not able to do it? Is it lack of will or is it lack of resources, or is it lack of vision? There is something that is missing somewhere. You would have seen, to our embarrassment, only yesterday a case has been made on the television that there is a tribe amongst us, Bhills, who mostly sell their women. One person comes on the television and says – no, we will rather die than give it up. If this is considered as a fundamental right, to sell women, then, of course, we are in a very difficult situation. And that is how I feel that how did it happen? The societies in which you live this does not happen. After all, there were tribals in your societies also. And there are tribals in our society also. How do we marry the two that we preserve their culture and also ensure that these inhuman issues are given up?

There is one point which I want to share with you. We have one very rich tradition of volunteerism. Higher education in India, particularly in the time of colonial era, came primarily because of volunteerism. The Brahma Samaj movement, the DAV college movement, the Khalsa college movement, the Aligarh movement – all these were made at a time when the British were there. All these were made at a time when Government was not helping. We have that very great tradition. I take pleasure in saying that some of those schools are now exporting. I went to Teheran and found a Khalsa school there. When I go to Oman and recently Dubai, I see a great dispersal of Indian schools. I also see a Khalsa college in London. I do not know who had founded it. Perhaps, the Ambassador knows. Well, this is something which is again a new era of cooperation, volunteerism and that voluntary cooperation in the expansion of education both inside and outside India is something where we can cooperate a great deal.

Again, it is not money that so much is needed, but again the schools and colleges that we open here or there have to see the level of their education, content and quality of their education. Are they coping with it? Some of them are. We take pride in claiming

that some of our educational institutions are at par with, perhaps, the best in the world. But, then, that is an exception, not a rule. How to make the rule? Again, there is something which you can possibly think and interact with each other on this issue.

Well, I think, this is a situation which is slightly away from volunteerism, but in voluntary acts the tensions that are growing in the world are there. Those of us who live here had our compatriots who live abroad, are very much concerned. Whatever happens in Iraq tomorrow concerns us. Some three million people, approximately, live in that region who are of Indian origin. I think my friend, the Indian Ambassador, will have to think of how to help them, how to see that they do not suffer in that process. We cannot be oblivious of their difficulties.

Similarly, when we see the onslaught of terrorism coming up, terrorism is affecting us in three ways. One, of course, it is affecting us in the sense of killings, terror. Second, it is disturbing the internal cohesion of the society because suspicion spreads. You start suspecting the entire community and, therefore, that results in the international tensions. Well, volunteerism again comes in. Elaji and her colleagues have done remarkably well in Gujarat to suppress this and we admire that. But, again, much more will have to be done. The third point is, terrorism is also a factor in international politics. It is a new word in the galaxy or in the lexicon of diplomacy. They decide our relationships; they decide how we interact with each other. Presently, the relationships amongst our neighbourhood are not as harmonious as it should be. Terrorism is a factor for this. One cannot be a neutralist or a factor, also independent factor or autonomous factor, in diplomacy.

I think all of us have to put our heads together because it is confined to this region. After all, 9/11 did not happen here and the fallouts of that. Therefore, 9/11 happens in a society where some of you live and then we are on the fallout side. How do we cope with that? The governmental efforts, of course, are there. But volunteerism comes in that particularly and I say this here that it is a social tension which causes great a deal of problems. There are social tensions at various levels. Some are identified; some more could also be identified. But I will not take your time on that. I will only say this thing that we want from you ideas. The Prime Minister yesterday has rightly asked you that he is not seeking money so much as your ideas. And I endorse that.

Therefore, some of you are social scientists. Some of you are acting in social spheres. Some of you are studying in universities. Please understand our problems. I have tried to mention only some of them. Please see how do we cooperate in inducting new ideas to specifically solve our problems and particularly I repeat environment. How do we improve sanitary conditions, how do we make our country clean, how do we induct new sanitary devices that are cheap?

Late Shrimati Indira Gandhi, at Stockholm, had said that poverty is the biggest penalty. It is. And, therefore, I think we can put our heads together to do something. Again, welcome to you all. Thank you so much for coming. Also, I think, apart from general enunciation of volunteerism, let us put it into practice some issues which can possibly be sorted out. Thank you.

Theme Address by Ms Priya Viswanath, Director & CEO, Catalyst India

Good afternoon. Mr Gujralji, Singhvijji, Ela behenji, Distinguished Panellists and Guests,

With so many distinguished people here, it will be very awkward to give you a speech. So, I am just going to basically talk about the role of the diaspora as it is today in the development space. Basically, the role of the diaspora is in two ways. One is clearly the human aspect and the other one is the financial aspect where the diaspora has a great

role to play in improving the development of this country. The trans-border environments today provide enormous scope for philanthropy, partnerships between the diaspora, and the Indian development sector will certainly be beneficial to the dis-privileged and the poorest of the poor in India.

It is recognized that there is a need for financial resources in the social sector and there are NRIs who have the desire to give to this sector. It was wonderful hearing yesterday the Prime Minister's focus on the social sector in his speech. He specifically mentioned about the partnerships for development and while talking about education he said – let us work together to seize the opportunity. For those of us, however, who are in the development sector in India who are keen to enlist the participation of NRIs and to promote diaspora.

In 2001, the Centre for the Advancement of Philanthropy in Mumbai commissioned me to write a book which is entitled "*Diaspora Indians on the Philanthropy Fast Track*". The book focusses on the Indian diaspora really in four regions – the Far East, the Middle East, US and the US. The regions were selected on the basis of the concentration of the Indians in each of these regions, the wealth of Indians and the patterns of philanthropic flow from the region so far. We also have limitations with regard to funding and so we could not cover all regions around the globe, but we have basically done these four regions.

What I am giving you now is really the views of the diaspora which are really varied from region to region. People often ask me – if Indians give, and they almost expect to hear the word no, but the fact is that Indians do give. Some of the key characteristics of the diaspora giving us, as I see it, are that Indians are informed givers. They know the causes they want to support and they have an emotional connect. They apprise themselves on initiatives, charities and ongoing social development activities in the country. In other words, they are not foolish givers. They will not just write the cheque when you need one. This really differs from region to region. A lot of Indian Americans, for example, are very informed about what is going on over here in the development space.

The other thing is that philanthropy is very personal and it is individual. The Indians in the diaspora are not really looking at organized charities. They find various means to give back to the country. They might give it back through their families; they might give it back through their friends; and they might give it back to the people they know. They do not normally or traditionally go the charity route that most of the western world does. Philanthropy is less organized in the Far and the Middle East than it is, let us say, in the UK and the US. Philanthropy is not restricted to give back to the Alma Mater such as the IIT, Heritage Fund which is what most of us know, which is in the public domain. While there is a lot of disaster based giving, there is also a sizeable amount of money coming in for entrepreneurship, information technology, micro-enterprise, primary education, literacy, health and women's development.

Now, the giving patterns of NRIs, as we have seen from our study, can be classified - and we classified them under three kinds. There is the generational giving, it changes from generation to generation. There is the relationship with the motherland. I will not generalize. But there are a number of Indians, for example, who live in the UK whose forefathers went to Africa almost a hundred years ago and then they migrated to the UK and the US. They have very little connect with India in terms of giving back to social causes or in terms of India's development. That is not to say that they do not give back; they do. But a large number of them also give back to Africa. So, the giving is basically divided in some instances between Africa and India.

There are first-generation Indians in the UK and the US who also give back to their own country where they live which now, in America, is popularly termed “backyard giving”. They give to the place where they live, they work and they earn and there has been an increase in this kind of giving post-September 11th. Indians who migrated to the US in the eighties and nineties are more closely, in many ways, associated with development causes in India. Perhaps, the connect with India is in the post-liberalized social economic growth. They have plans to return and they plan to invest in the future. They also value education and they give generously to educational literacy initiatives.

Other Indians, for example in the Seattle region and some of them in the Silicon Valley and Singapore, support entrepreneurship development and organizations like Distant Partners focus on leveraging IT for development. Their motto is really teach people how to fish as against cheque-book charity. There are also a growing number of institutional initiatives that raise money in a focussed manner such as the American-Indian Foundation, Distant Partners, the Rejuvenate India Movement, Just Giving, Avishkar, the Pushpawati Loomba Trust in the UK and the I.K. Foundation.

The other role, which is other than financial, that we also notice is volunteerism which is being promoted in a big way by the American-Indian Foundation and others. I was just not talking about the role of mentorships - how people can mentor projects and groups in India from abroad. In the Far East, we saw more personal and traditional charity forms and there are estimates that there are about 2,00,000 people of Indian origin in the four regions that we visited – Singapore, Thailand, Hong Kong and Indonesia – and we figured out they were charitable by nature and they give generously both to the country of their origin as well as to the countries they have adopted. But their compulsions are different. They give because they uphold the family tradition of giving and sharing with the less-fortunate. There is a religious based giving which is faith-based. They give to avail of tax benefits. Some of them give to assuage their conscience and a feeling of guilt for being better off than their brethren back home. Some of them give to be one with the community or sometimes be on the right side of the Embassy, as was the case in the time of the Gujarat earthquake. When they give to India, it can also be, because they want India to do well and rid itself of the labels of poverty, illiteracy, underdevelopment, etc., or they simply give because they feel good; they feel good about giving.

How often they give, who they give to, how much they give and when they give, especially when they come to India depended on how long they had been away. In the Far East, now you will see that the first generation gives back more. Their bonds with the local community they were living in, their bonds with the community or organizations that they are giving to, their families might be involved with these organizations. And the diaspora in the region as elsewhere in the diaspora also wanted to know the antecedents of the organizations they are contributing to; how much of the money is being spent. Most of them wanted a regular report of the feedback and they are particularly interested in the reports sent back by organizations like CRY and World Vision.

Now, the Middle East was a very different scenario. It is very difficult to do this research because it was post-September 11th; the problems with travel and visas. But also the set of circumstances that exist in the Middle East are kind of different from what it exists in the rest of the world. The presence of the Indian business community in the Middle East differs considerably in terms of numbers from country to country. However, they all play a truly significant role in economic terms in each of the countries in the region. The Indian community residing in the Middle East has a long historical tradition of informal and semi-formal responses by communities and individuals to philanthropy. Historically, emigrant groups from various parts of the Middle East have sent back remittances which are small sums of money that they transferred informally to their families back home for small projects in their hometowns. The South Indian community,

which is the largest, the Sindhi community which is a prominently business community also send back large amounts of money.

What we noticed in the Middle East was that there was a lot of community-based giving from the region – sending money back to the needy people or needy causes in their native neighbourhood and it worked heavily in favour of most philanthropists because the new communities in which they themselves constituted really for them to structure their homeland, it was the connect with the homeland.

In the Middle East, there is also another very distinct problem and post-September 11th that has been aggravated a little more because philanthropy is really a bad word. Nobody wants to talk about philanthropy. None of the Indians wanted to talk about philanthropy unlike in other parts of the world. They would like to keep it, kind of, private. Some of the people that we spoke to also decided on it. In the past, they had tremendous problems with giving back in terms of the red-tapism forced by the Government here. So, they just basically gave it back to their family and set up trusts here and they did not want any legal recognition or anything and they became a kind of a very informal thing. So, it is very hard to really draw up on patterns. But we also find that there are some individuals in the Middle East, because of the level of acceptance that they needed within the community there, that some of them, when they raised money for causes in India, also gave half the money to causes in the Middle East itself. So, it is a very different kind of giving that is practised there.

Some of the tips that we gained on effective fund-raising from the Indian diaspora in these different regions were – Indian NGOs were really keen to enlist the participation of the NRI community. There is a need to look at some critical issues which are transparency, corruption, delivery which really act as the basic impediments in promoting any kind of charitable giving. There is concern over the misuse of funds. There is concern also about the high percentage of costs incurred by NGOs in running their organizations. People in the United States, not just those of Indian origin, are questioning administrative costs of development organizations. There is also an increasing discomfort over leakage of funds and the lack of trust that each dollar is going to reach where it is supposed to and it is going to be used where it is supposed to be used. The issue of wanting to give but being unaware of mechanisms is there. This is the big problem. Some people want to give back money to India, but they do not know how to go about it. In the United States, for example, it is very expensive to set up a trust or a 501-C-3 registered charity to be able to give back money to India. It costs a couple of thousand dollars to keep it activated every year, both fiscal and legal. So, there is a lack of awareness on how do we give back to India. So, as NGOs, we need to build awareness on how this can be done, how more and more money can be raised from the region.

As far as the human resource angle goes, there are a lot of people who really want to help India. The fact is that they do not know how to, and we need to find a way in which we can engage them more effectively. Some of the other broad statements that were made, particularly in the UK were that there are a large number of Indian NGOs, small NGOs and sometimes fly-by-night organizations that go abroad to raise money and they neither deliver nor is there any accountability for the money. So, people felt that from the Indian NGO side or the development side, we must have one credible face when we go out and try to engage with the diaspora. This whole system of running around with a begging bowl does not work with the NRIs. The NRIs are pretty-informed givers; they know what they want to give to.

Thank you.



Address by Mr Pradeep Kashyap, Executive Director, American-Indian Foundation, USA

Thank you. The role that I see myself playing here is simply reminding everybody what the time is. We have exactly an hour and our objective for the session is to have members from the Government here who will tell us a little about the regulatory framework and members from the NGOs or the diaspora community here who will tell us something about their experiences and hopefully out of this dialogue we can come up with a few specific actions that we can then present collectively to see if something good will come out of it. Clearly, we hope we will be meeting again next year and we hope what we come up with would be acted on.

With that very brief introduction, I have to request the speakers to be very brief in their comments. Otherwise, I have the unpleasant duty of ringing this bell here. So, with that, may I request the speakers from the RBI to start? Mrs Deepa Srivastava to start the discussion. I think she is not here. Mr Muralidharan to speak.

I will simply summarize here some of the issues that I see as common patterns and we will try and articulate them back to the organizers of the Pravasi Bharatiya Divas – to see if in a little more organized way they can respond to this. I pick up a pattern here and the first one I pick up is an articulation and the need for, what one can call broadly, a single window. I think the frustration that a large number of Pravasis face is the multiplicity of regulatory entities that they have to deal with to do any registration or any setting up of trusts etc. and having a single window will go a long way in alleviating those frustrations.

The second point that I think we really need to raise and I guess it is a sub-sect of the first point; it is specifically and I guess it is the testimony to the heat in the room – it is on the issues of customs and simplification and user-friendliness about sending in kind charity into India which seems to get the most amount of heat in almost every gathering of this nature. I think we would like to more formally request the organizers to see if not only this process can be simplified but also communicated. We are picking up the point Anand is making. I think lack of relevant information is a major point of frustration. So, having a simplified policy of customs and regulations for bringing in kind charity and having those policies appropriately communicated is important.

There are, of course, other points which I have picked up here. I think there was a good point that Mr Loomba made about the Government encouraging inward philanthropy from Pravasis in the form of Government support he called it, but more specifically he even mentioned matching funds which, I thought, was a very interesting concept. You hear a large number of government-allocated funds are under-utilized because there is no catalyst or trigger for using them and, perhaps, having them in some way matched, the flow of Pravasi funds for philanthropy could be one way. I guess minor issues of tax and visas would get addressed as part of the single window.

So, those are the common threads I pick up in this panel discussion. Thank you panellists for being patient. I really do not envy my successor because now he really is in between the tea and the remaining discussions. Without, further ado, I welcome him.

Address by Mr Muralidharan, Reserve Bank of India

I will be very brief. The Reserve Bank of India's instructions relate mainly to the conduct of the operations of the account of the charity organizations and other NGOs which are trying to operate in India through the present system. We have a very simple procedure. One basic requirement is that they have to be registered by the Ministry of Home Affairs and they have to take a certificate of registration. The basic and fundamental

requirements for the banks in India to open an account for operation are to be fulfilled. Until and unless the registration is available, they can neither open an account nor can they receive remittances which are sent from abroad for the credit of the organization. The intention is that the money which is coming into the country into the accounts of these organizations and particularly post-9/11 the concerns of the money being used for terrorist or other purposes is uppermost in the minds of the government. So, apart from this there would be no hassles. The concerned organizations would like to operate in India and they can receive funds. The clearance from the Home Ministry is a must. The Government, from time to time, enlightens us about these things.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

Okay. Now, very briefly, I will simply point out what the American-Indian Foundation's experience was in trying to set up some entity here in India. We find ourselves going through a three-phased presence here. The first phase was we open a representative office; the second phase which we are entering now is setting up a trust and the third phase will be where we want to be and would ideally have liked to be, right from the beginning which is the Section 25 entity. Now, maybe, the next speaker can guide us how do we get to Nirvana at stage one instead of going through these intermediary stages. Now, I do, of course, understand that that may not necessarily be the role of the RBI. But somebody has to tell us who to talk to, and for what. If there is a one window or one place people from outside can go to, it will be good. If every Department just says we are doing this, then it becomes a little difficult. Maybe, the next speaker could talk on that a little bit. That is Mr Srivastava from the Home Ministry.

Address by Mr Pravin Srivastava, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs

Thank you. We in the Home Ministry are basically dealing with the registration of organizations for the purpose of receiving foreign contribution from abroad. I would like to clarify at the beginning that we do not have any requirement for the foreign sources to obtain any sort of clearance from any entity in India before they want to send foreign contributions. It is only the Indian entities, the Indian NGOs which are set up in India, which are required to obtain registration or obtain permission from the Ministry of Home Affairs before they can get the foreign contribution.

We have two types of permissions that we give. One is the prior permission which is for a one-time specific amount and a registration which is a one-time affair. Thereafter, you do not need to approach the Ministry again and again for obtaining the permission to get the foreign contribution. Once you have registered, then you can get the foreign contribution from any source and from any country. We have certain time-limits specified in our legislation. Normally, the prior permission is supposed to be given within three months and for the registration which is a more long-term recognition which is given, we have a limit of six months within which the applications must be disposed of.

Delegate

So far as setting up of an office in India is concerned, there are three other entities for which RBI gives approval. They are – representative office, project office and liaison office. These are the three entities which are concerned for other organizations for which the Reserve Bank of India gives approval. Basically, the representative office is supposed to give only the representative activities in India. The business and other things are not supposed to be done by a representative office. The project office, when a specific project has been awarded by the Indian Government or any organization,

comes into picture, then it can be set up with the formal approval of the Reserve Bank of India. That is given at all regional offices. Then, approval of liaison office is centralized in Bombay. That is limited to giving permission for purely liaison activities. No business or any other activity is supposed to be done through that account. That is all for setting up organizations other than trusts.

Mr I K Gujral

You have not understood his point. His point is very different. Kindly explain again.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

The point is if some entity from outside India wishes to come and set up an office or an entity in India, obviously for philanthropic reasons, and I understand that there is a rep office thing I understand there is a trust and I understand there is a society; I understand all that. The issue is – if one can get what one wants in a very direct and simple and straightforward fashion, in an expedient fashion, it will be good. I am told Section 25 can take a year and a half to get things done. That is just not acceptable.

Mr Amod Kanth

Can I make an intervention? I represent an organization called Prayas and also I know the subject. If you really want to serve in this country, in the sense if you want to put yourself in the forefront as an association or a group which has certain objectives which obviously are going to be objectives to serve the country or the society for whatever reasons you want to serve as any society does in India, any voluntary organization, in that case, there are only three ways to operate. One, of course, is through a Society Registration Act. The second is Trustees Act and that you become a small trust. You set up a body here, an entity as you call it and then on account of those objectives you go and serve. The third, of course, is a company. Companies also can do – you are referring to Section 25 – I think a company also can serve in this country provided they have certain objectives in mind, that they are not making profit, but they are going to serve people. In my opinion, these are the three valid ways.

Address by Dr L M Singhvi, Rajya Shabha MP, Chairman, Organizing Committee of PBD, Senior Advocate

Mr Chairman, I will take just half a minute. I think the issue has been discussed threadbare in our report. But the unfortunate fate of most reports is that they are seldom read. The bureaucracy also – read them the least. I do not agree at all that there is a need to have five different windows for clearance. Surely, we must understand that we are living in an age where time counts and energy should not be wasted. So long as it meets our national objectives and permitted framework of security verification, we must be quick about it; we must be businesslike about it. I have many sad experiences in this way. I must tell you a story, two little conversations I had with late Shri Rajiv Gandhi who was very concerned with all these matters. He said – how do we go into the 21st century. I am talking of many, many years ago, 15 years ago. I said all that you have to do is two things – one is create a single window and the other is get rid of corruption. After a few days, he said – “When I asked my officers about the single window which I had created, they said, Sir, it has become the 14th window in addition to the 13 windows which are already in existence.” I do not know why he would take such an assiduous interest.

I have spent 52 years in law. I know that you can give everybody such a long rope that every citizen will hang himself in utter desperation. I think the Ministry must understand that you are not user-friendly. The Ministry must understand that you have a legitimate interest in safeguarding the country's security. But you have no legitimate interest in denying to the country the inflow of generous, well-meaning and patriotic philanthropy – whatever the word is best suited. I think it is important for us to understand – the enormous difficulties for a person to run from one post to the other post is something that the Government must begin to recognize and our problem is that unless the Government begins to recognize it there will be no solution. That is why the Central action is very, very useful.

I know that everyone of them is a patriotic Indian citizen. I know that everyone of them plays a very important part in sustaining the system which is important. I know that every civil servant wants to contribute to the well-being of the nation and to the welfare of the people of India. But somehow we are constantly becoming prisoners of received wisdom which is outdated, anti-diluvian and anachronistic. I think it is important for us and I am using clear and strong words, I think it is important for all of us to change our mindsets. You do not give reasons. When a man applies for registration, Mr Srivastava, you do not give any reasons why you are refusing registration. Do you know that the court can haul you up for not giving reason. But that is not the way anybody will do it. How can we, living in a country which is so deeply democratic, so deeply committed to the rule of law, conduct itself in a manner where there is absolutely no accountability? There are institutions which have been denied registration and for which I had to approach the highest authorities in the country, for no reason at all. I do not know how you can justify the denial of the benefits of legitimate patriotic Indian philanthropy or Indian giving. I think the diaspora must be given an opportunity to help in nation-building. Denying that opportunity is to deny ourselves the benefit of that fraternity, that sense of commonness that we feel together.

I think it is not the question of asking this question or that question. I can answer all those questions specifically. It is a question of addressing and introspecting and seeing what procedures can be trained. You are the best people. You know the procedures best. I have not had any difficulty with the Reserve Bank of India. But I think the Ministries have to understand that they can, if they so wish. If there is a political will, they can do it.

We must all ask ourselves the question why we do things which are wrong and justify them, but we must ask ourselves the question how we can rectify them, how we can put them on a kind of a speedy course of action and a just and legitimate and proper course of action. I would appeal to the distinguished officers who are present here, I am very grateful that they are present here, because their presence is the only assurance ultimately of problem-solving. That problem-solving is something which we cannot do in this big meeting. The problem-solving is something that you alone can do by identifying those problems. All that we can do or all the others can do is to put before you the problems. If you like, I can prepare about 50 case-studies of the problems that arise. Surely, twenty of them may not deserve any consideration, but thirty of them deserve consideration.

Delegate

Unless the FCRA is amended, it is not possible to...

Delegate

Just a minute. I am going beyond this question of registering for philanthropy. When funds are to reach in other countries - I come from the United States and we have given



for many years to many charities - recently, we have discovered that the funds which have been collected for one use have been directed for other uses. Have they any system, concept here? Or, in the process of saving, are there any checks and balances to see whether the funds which come here have been put to right use for which they have been intended? Otherwise, the philanthropy has no good reason to come here.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

Madam, whilst you have a good point, what I would simply say is that it is an issue of regulatory issue in the United States. That is not an issue here. If the persons who are sending the money from the United States here, if those funds go by local regulations here, then it does not catch the point that you are making. That point you are making has to be enforced where the money is collected for a particular purpose.

Dr Chamra

I am from Australia. I am a Station Director of the Rotary Club. May I suggest something? Why don't we take the issues aboard and then follow them up rather than having a discussion about how to solve the issues. I would like to raise one more issue. We are trying to send furniture as well as computers through the Rotary Club. It is not the question of establishing; it is not the Ministry of Home Affairs. It is the Department of Income-tax. They want to put a tax on the used computers and used items. I am just raising the issue.

Address by Dr U K Sen, Member (Customs and Export Promotion), Central Board of Excise and Customs, Department of Revenue, Ministry of Finance

Good afternoon. I have been invited and I feel honoured to address this august gathering to tell what we are doing and what we are wanting to do. Let me tell you at the outset, before you give me a wakeup call that I should stop, please let me know.

Basically, we are dealing with issues relating to deregulation. If you look at the scenario ten years back and ten years today down the line, we have changed the laws, we have changed the regulations and we have demolished a lot of roadblocks to align our interests, to make things happen. We are talking of trade, I suppose, not only of philanthropy. When we talk of trade, I am sure that many of you would like to set up industries here...

Delegate

That gentleman raised the issue which was out of line, but was a relevant issue. If you simply address that, we all will be very happy. Let me rephrase what I was saying. A lot of philanthropic organizations overseas try to send computers, furniture - you name it and they want to send it; and the hassles that they have to go through to get those goods inside this country are mind-boggling. Simply, if you can figure out a way to address that, I am sure he will be a happy man and so would all be.

Dr U K Sen

I can assure you that the Central Board of Excise and Customs has got duty-free exemptions for charitable organizations and even for used computers or the kind of

stuff that he is mentioning. We give duty-free exemptions also. On the income-tax side, my colleague is over there on the Central Board of Direct Taxes who would like to shed light as to what are the other exemptions he would like to give. So far as I am concerned, and I deal with duty exemptions, and that is a very important milestone to get things into the country provided they are a charitable organization. So, for charitable organizations we have an open-door policy.

Delegate

Mr Sen, you are saying if the receiving entity is a charitable organization, then you give the exemption.

Dr U K Sen

No, the organization which is the donor, if that is a charitable organization as well there is no problem. He says one of the issues I am raising. This is just one of the small issues.

Delegate

But I want to just understand the context here. Let him speak.

Delegate

The Rotary International under the donations in kind, I am sure, America and Australia and many other countries and Europeans do that; and we were trying to send computers and the hospital equipment to Chennai. The Chennai Rotary Club, which is registered and is within the limits of everything, cannot take them because it has to pay 40 per cent tax. That is the simple reason. We can send it to anywhere in the world, but not to India. I would like to know what you are doing for that.

Dr U K Sen

If I may add on this, I have not seen this request so far. But if you send a request to me tomorrow, I will be able to give an answer day after.

Delegate

Okay, where will I get the time to talk to you?

Dr U K Sen

You kindly come to my office. I will give you my address.

Delegate

No, but, Mr Sen, what will be the reason? Let me make one point. His story is not unique. His story is the common story. I will add here. I will supplement your point by saying that there are endless cases where you have given duty-free exemptions to charitable organizations. Even today I had given.

Mr I K Gujral

Four hundred computers are lying in Gujarat.

Ms Ela Bhatt

Perhaps, you remember the case of SEWA which is a very recent one. It was during the earthquake time when some students came together from Yale University and around, they donated computers. I knew a company which was giving about 400 computers – all meant for rural girls to learn them.

Delegate

Are we not deciding this issue? I think we can take it up later.

Delegate

It came to my notice. The issue before the audience is how fast we can do it. That is the point. That is the right climate. That is why I am talking.

Delegate

I am sure there are all these people who have got individual stories. It should be horrifying. We will simply assume that there are enough cases. So, if you will simply address the pattern here, what is the problem, it will be good.

Mr U K Sen

I take this as an open house. On the issue relating to duty exemption to charitable organizations, we in the Ministry are very, very forthright to take whatever is possible provided they fall within the four walls of charity. We have got a very big list. We are giving computers and various kinds of things. But, believe me, this is not to hedge an answer to Dr Bansal. But we are giving every second day every third day we are getting a lot of requests and we screen the requests and we try to give the best possible answer to the point. We are here to help you, we are here to change your mindset and we are here to see that things do not go round. I thought that I was speaking, Mr Kashyap, not only on the charitable organizations ...

Delegate

That is the only reason they are here. That is the only reason this group has met here.

Mr U K Sen

So, if there is anything, any particular area on which the august gathering would like to know, they could come to my office. We can make out a listing and then we can sort it out. There is no problem.

Delegate

Mr Sen, people could not be individually approaching you. If things like spectacles, hearing

aids are coming from abroad to a charitable organization, they should be exempt.

Delegate

It is coming. Believe me, it is coming. I do not know what happened. It is coming.

Delegate

Thank you very much.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

Mr Sen, you can be sure that in the summary of this session we will have something very specific on this issue.

Dr U K Sen

Yes, alright.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

Just one moment. We need to hear this gentleman also from the Ministry of Finance regarding the tax matters.

Address by Mr A J Majumdar, Joint Secretary, Tax Planning and Legislation, Ministry of Finance

The situation is quite hot and my subject is income-tax. But believe me, we are never for taxing any institution or trust or any society which wants to help the needy and even promote a good public cause. We have a definition – a term called charitable purpose in the Income-tax Act which includes relief to the poor, advancement of education, medical relief and advancement of any object of general public utility which is a very wide term. So, any institution which is set up in India and wants to do these things, promote these causes – then they enjoy 100 per cent tax exemption. Only there are certain riders. The riders are that profits, if any, cannot be distributed to anybody. That is one. Secondly, 85 per cent of the surplus of the year should be normally spent during the year for the object of the institution and 15 per cent can be accumulated without any condition; but if you want to accumulate, not spend 85 per cent, but accumulate it for a specific cause you can do so with an intimation to the income-tax authorities for five years and then later on spend it for that purpose.

Another important condition is that the funds which you accumulate, they must be invested in government approved securities. This is the basic structure. Of course, we have several other provisions for prevention of abuse. I will not go into that. Now, the main issue which came up earlier about delay – for setting up a Section-25 company under the Companies Act, you have to go to the Registrar of Companies. That might take slightly longer time because you have to go from place to place. If you set up a society or a trust to begin with, it can be done in a day – the institution – and then after some time you can convert it yourself into a Section-25 company.

There is another requirement under our Act. The law is meant not only for Pravasi



Bharatiyas setting up a trust in this country but also the domestic cause. There is a requirement of registration. When you set up the trust, within one year you must apply for registration to the Commissioner of Income-Tax and he, after perusing the objects of the trust, will grant you a registration within six months of your application. If he does not, the legal interpretation is that you have got the registration. If there is delay in application, that also can be condoned. Of course, we are not concerned with things coming into the country and going out of the country. That was an issue which was raised earlier. That is mainly a customs issue. But so far as income-tax is concerned and we are so happy that you are coming forward to help the poor people in India, you will not face any problem in income-tax. That is all I can say.

Mr I K Gujral

If you can give me a minute? I thank you very much for giving me a moment. I am taking one moment again because when I was speaking, my friend, Dr Singhvi, came in between. I want to express my feeling of gratitude to what he has done. I think if we are assembled today here, it is primarily because of him and I think I am voicing your feelings. Since he is in a hurry to go, I did not want to remain unheard on this that I am also one of the admirers. Thank you. I am taking leave of you. Whatever I have heard, Mr Kashyap, kindly keep one thing in mind – there are several things which are a part of us. Suspicion is one of them. Therefore, we ask every gentleman to prove that you are not a gentleman till you prove it to be. Therefore, that is how we function in this Government. I was telling him – I am sorry, I will take a minute more – an anecdote. I was Ambassador in Moscow. Roerich died, the senior Roerich. He had a huge treasure of artefacts which he endorsed to India. When he died, the custodian wrote to the Government of India to please take them. The reply went – please ask her why does she want to give these to us. The end-result of it was that the lady got so fed up that she gave it to the Russians who have started a museum there and they went there. But our file is alright.

Address by Mr Rahul Deepankar, President, New Republic India International, USA

Thank you. Mr Chairman, Mrs Bhatt and Friends,

I think through a very intense and initial discussion we have concluded one thing that all the claims of difficulty are nothing but misunderstanding on our part. From each department, from each Ministry the message is, there is absolutely nothing wrong. We have no idea what the heads are talking about. So, you can understand with your leadership, with the collective interaction that some country is in total down-path and we fail to understand the reasoning behind the hurdles. You can imagine how a common man who comes and attempts to achieve something through this maze of bureaucracy – what kind of difficulties do they face.

I would like to address certain other things. Those observations come through my experience in establishing a girls' inter-college in my village and that intertwines with the observations of our former Prime Minister, Mr Gujral. He asked what the State can do in volunteerism. One thing they can do is get out of the way, find a way to get out of the way and volunteerism will thrive. He did ask – how do you get along with each other. Well, create a social atmosphere of equality and justice. Without equality, we cannot give justice to anybody and without justice we cannot create an environment of peace in the societies we live in. At the dawn of modern times they established everybody is created equal. Let us create that atmosphere; let us send that message to every human being in our society and we will see the results.

Through my experience in establishing the institution for girls in my village of birth, we

faced multilayer difficulties. First was the distress even in the community itself – are you really going to do it? So many people come and promise us so many things Nothing happens. What will happen to this foundation stone? Is it going to be a seat of birds only?

Very simple. The regulations are too many; let us minimize those. I have seen the experiences when we have – every clerk says, you may be doing philanthropy, you may be getting some peace out of it, you may be getting fame out of it. Why do you take away our right? Let us address the corruption and let us streamline it. Actually, not very long time ago, the biggest strength of bureaucracy is in self-survival and they have created their steps for their own good because every step you will have to give some, what you call, facilitation fee. And that is bribe. I think if we can come up with some suggestions, it will be good. For example, in my school we have established from Sixth class to Tenth class, for the last two years, that school has shown the best results in the whole area of the rural community there. But the Directorate, and my place is in Bulandshahr, do as not give us recognition for Inter-college class. What is the reason? They have demanded things that have already been provided, but they refuse to recognize their own people. Why is this vicious cycle? It is only that unless you take care of bribe portion of it, nothing will move.

There are only two things – either you have a danda, or you have money. The people like us, who were not known – we do not have a danda. They count on us. One has said – the person who has got this much money, maybe is having still more. Let him pay to us also and then only the work will move on. So, these are the difficulties we have faced and it is only one aspect of it. Because of lack of time, I will not take more time.

Address by Mr Raj Loomba, Chairman & MD, Rinku Group PLC, UK

Thank you. I would like to say one thing and that is that India has a lot of problems and we are all discussing those problems. There are problems in every sector. I believe in one thing and that is that education is the most important thing for anybody. In fact, it is a human right, if I may say so. I was just reading the papers passed on to me a couple of minutes ago and it says – 100 million children are out of school. We are talking about many issues which are only relevant to individuals or communities or large communities. But here is a national problem. I think through philanthropy we should work out some sustainable development of the children's education.

I set up a charity myself four years ago and Dr Singhvi has gone and seen it. In fact, he is Chairman-Trustee of it in India. We are focussing on a certain area of children and that is the children of widows. Basically, the children of widows are very close to my heart because I lost my father when I was young and my mother made sure that we were all educated ourselves and sent me to America for my own education. I think, when people send money into this country there should be an easier system. I also experienced a lot of problems. Thank God, Dr Singhvi was there to solve those problems for me. But I was quite frustrated – bringing money here and having a lot of problems in setting up the charity and making sure it works.

The regulatory issue is that we need a permission from the RBI and they say they have to check the character and the verification of the trustees. We sent all the information and there was nothing that took place for two months. I went to see the officer myself. I had to wait for four hours. I had to go in and out; he was busy. It took me four hours before I really saw him. He sees me and he says – "I am sorry, we cannot find your application, can you fill up again?" It is filled up again and he said – "Come back after a week." We went after a week again. Because it was quite urgent we wanted to organize the inauguration of the charity by the Prime Minister of India, and then I was told that

we still need verification. I said – “Okay, you can get verification of the four trustees; one of them is myself. You can contact the British High Commission in UK and tell me what verification you need for Dr Singhvi.” The third trustee was Mrs Malik who is the wife of the General in this country and the fourth trustee is already involved in this area, he is already a trustee of three other charities. This kind of treatment was really putting me off. But I had an objective. So, it took a few days and Dr Singhvi helped me. These things should be resolved.

The second point that I want to make very quickly because the time is very short is – we people in England or America do have interest of India and the problems of India at our heart. And we do work very hard to raise funds. We send them here. I would like to ask the Government of India to consider supporting this kind of efforts which are made by the overseas Indians, by matching grants and making these things a bit simpler to follow. At this moment, I do not even know where to go and who to speak. In fact, I tried three different Departments and each one has said – “Well, widows’ section is there, children’s section is there and we do not give them money.” I have given it off; whereas, I think, our work would have been duplicated and triplicated and the real benefits would have shown by now.

So, these are the two points I would like to say. There is a need for making simpler systems which we have talked earlier. I would recommend that, maybe now, listening to all the problems since yesterday and all the promises made by the Government yesterday, maybe it is time that a Ministry for the Overseas Diaspora is set up within the Government so that there is one person who controls all the issues – whether they are economic, social, charitable, whatever. These are my thoughts.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity.

**Address by Mr Om Dutta Sharma,
Founder Trustee,
Pandit Sitaram Balkishan Charitable Trust, USA**

I do not have anything to say about regulatory issues. I do not know why these things are really being mentioned here really. I said it here also and earlier in the United States. I have the same name trust in New York and the same name trust here in New Delhi. I did not find any difficulty at all, although there is one thing definitely. I was a lawyer in income-tax here in New Delhi. That made the feat easy for me.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

I think you are making a larger point that having access to the right departments in the Government makes life a lot easier and you have the good fortune of that background.

Mr Om Dutta Sharma

But for the last 30 years I have been out of the country.

Mr Pradeep Kashyap

But I have no doubt that there are a lot of your contemporaries; your friends are still around in the right departments.

Mr Om Dutta Sharma

But actually the thing is we all have to do something. I cannot blame. I do not have the habit of blaming others. If the work is not done, I will just get out. But my work is done; this trust is running very well. I am raising the funds for the school for the girls in the village, for a high school. It is my duty. I am not obliging anybody; I am not blaming anybody. It is my duty to work. If there is a difficulty, it is my duty to face that difficulty and try to overcome that difficulty. This is what I have to say.

Address by Dr Deniso Jayasooria, Executive Director, Social Strategic Foundation, Malaysia

Thank you, Mr Chairman. I count it a privilege to be invited. I am from Malaysia working with the Social Strategic Foundation. Now, I would make five brief points related to regulatory but calling much more into policy which is the background to regulation and teams because it is linked to human development survey's social work. I think in the policy that is developed, there needs to be a very clear framework that calls for a partnership model between the State and the voluntary sector, while regulation and rules and legislation might be there, that is just the mechanics. In the Malaysian context, there is opportunity for Malaysian NGOs to participate in the policy dialogue framework like budget, to present your findings from micro-studies or experiences and to influence public policy at the national level. At the same time, there is the sort of a top-up grant from the Government for projects undertaken. So, such a policy, if people within the Indian context have of partnerships not only in a pioneering role but also a complementary role alongside Government, it might be useful.

Secondly, I think there must be some very clear guidelines to an ethos of service that it is not charity and dependency.

In this context, I think some sort of ethics of fund-raising and accountability of donor bodies is necessary because there can be forms of fund-raising which is far more damaging to the recipients. To what extent is there accountability – not just to Government regulation but accountability to villages, to ordinary people and that might be the key point. I think that in terms of aid groups and NGOs working within this context of voluntary sector, there needs to be some focus along balancing macro and micro and between short-term and long-term; because very often I think the sort of voluntary philanthropic giving might actually do more damage in the long run than in the short-term.

Fourthly, this was a point raised just now – in terms of institutional building and capacity building towards sustainability and how it gropes in and voluntary sector organizations from outside would ensure that the funding that they provide will actually build sustainability of India-based organizations and in terms of not only bought development but also supporting staff development. These are policies that we as contributing organizations begin to develop. I think, fifthly, to have some very clear indicators for impact assessment is needed. This is an aspect that the regulatory policies might need to introduce that there is specific impact assessment of projects to ensure effectiveness or efficiency.

The other two points are general, but I will raise them at this point very briefly. I think a lot of the discussion today is money-focussed and what from outside we can bring in. But I think the tremendous voluntary sector movement within India and the models and the lessons that can be drawn are enormous. The work of SEWA and other micro-enterprise movements, people's organizations are tremendous that those of us from outside of India can actually learn from these models, practices and examples.



Address by Mr Jay Philip, Programme Director, American-Indian Foundation, USA

Thank you very much. I am here this afternoon representing the American-Indian Foundation and specifically our service programme and the mission behind our programme is simply to provide a channel and an opportunity for folks in the United States of America to come to India and to engage in hands-on voluntary service. We for started our programme in June 2001 and in the course of the work we have done for over a year and a half till today, we have sent 52 persons, brought them here to India to engage directly in important works with various NGOs. I am particularly on the topic of regulatory issues. Broadly speaking, there are two main categories of issues. As the starting point are the issues around bringing individuals into the country to engage in direct voluntary work and specifically around the visas and the type of visas that those individuals acquire and all we can say very, very specifically around that there is a broad feeling that emerges. This is a very humble opinion based on direct experience. I think a lot of the people here today represent various Ministries. They are all very dedicated and very efficient at what they do. Our experience has been if you know the right people and you approach them properly, you can get specific solutions to specific problems very quickly. It is a question of there not being broad minds and broad guidance around general issues and processes around as to how to do things that need more clarity.

The second big area of issues is once the persons have arrived here, issued around both security and specifically around proper registration and then a second level of issues support being provided to those fellows for their living and other expenses and specifically speaking what if there are any tax implications to organizations like ours who are bringing volunteers into the country to engage in this type of service.

As a specific example, we had, to date, been able to bring our fellows into the country under a particular sanction that was put in place in the wake of the Gujarat earthquake. This time around, it is the first time that we brought fellows into India for a nine-month period and the first time that we discussed, we applied for a specific kind of visa and there is quite a bit of process involved. I think, without having known the right people and the specific folks to approach, I think we would have probably had a very difficult time. But the positive part of our story is that we were fortunate, we did know the right people; we were able to meet our other requirements. But as an organization we also get inquiries from a broad from people all over the world who have insisted on coming to India and engaging in service and there is not one single place where they can go and specifically speaking our experience has been, though we do enjoy very good relations with both our consulates and embassies in the US they will tend to give you the process against some questions.

For example, if the right person whom you do not know was in town, you will be given six months' stay and there are specific examples as well. We had a fellow who happened to be in Prague at the time when American visa was expiring and they seem to be out of the way and it was impossible to get whatever we needed done. But the broad theme is that there are a lot of dedicated and very efficient persons who can solve problems and solve them quickly. But, broadly speaking, we do need to provide people from all over the world with guidance and how do we bring people into India who are interested in engaging direct voluntary service or what is the quickest and easiest way to do that. Secondly, there are issues of security and support and specifically Mr Sanjeev Dutta and Mr Majumdar can help us on the questions of what are the tax implications, etc.

Address by Mr Anand Shah, Founder and Executive Director, INDICORPS, USA

Let us say that, I think, the heat of the discussion is somewhat discouraging to young people who are attempting to do one or do things. This is about regulatory framework. I will take a moment. What I want to say is that anywhere in the world wherever you go, even in the US, there is a regulatory framework. It took us a long time to set up our institution in the US. There is a lot of paper work that has to be done. That same amount of paper work exists here. I think what is lacking is actually information. We do not know. I have no idea where to go to start looking for tax exemptions etc. There are many different Ministries that are involved. Personally, I think, if the information was available, we will be looking at a much easier process of setting up an entity. I think there is a way of changing the regulatory framework. He said you should scrap the Government in India and re-start. I am not sure that speaking to the Ministers may be the best way to do it. All of us hear, as Pravasi Bharatiyas, we should say that may we have some sort of connection to this land because we care about India. I think this connection should make us proud as Indians. I think sometimes it does not make us proud.

A number of speakers here and before, in the last couple of days, have talked about giving back to India. I think we talk about investing. Usually, it is about money and FCRA and this sort of thing. Investing is not the only way. It is not just the money. Without dedicated individuals who have a vision, you are not going to see change happen. The money will not get utilized effectively. Look at Shrimati Ela Behen. She is a very good example of how dedication can get you somewhere and you can fight these hurdles. I am seeing a chance where you see a hurdle. We talk about these challenges and hurdles. It is just the quality that is important. I could not be sure where the money gets somewhere. I could not know whether the money is being used appropriately. How do we send unused resources to those who need it in kind? We have a culture of giving. We want to give. Here is my challenge to you as a diasporic Indian. I think that the discussion goes somewhere. But as part of the expatriate community who has a culture to give and who has learned and who has earned – what can we give to this land and for whom?

We know that India could be better; we know the regulatory format could be better because we have seen it better. We have been in the developed countries and know how countries develop. My question to you is – it is our responsibility as Indians abroad to see that we also help this country develop. So, we also help changes in the regulatory framework by coming here. I actually come and spend six months in a year in this country and do something. You watch where the money goes; you watch, if it gets utilized, how it gets utilized. Make sure it is used properly. We do not need these people. Honestly, I came here two years ago. I went to the office seven days in a row, three times a day. They had to listen to me. You have a special treatment here as an NRI or a PIO. As much as you would like, if you either go to an office and say I am from America or Canada or UK they will listen to you.

I will give you a small anecdote. In a small village in Maharashtra, there is a board which says that – “if your animal in its shed dies in a natural disaster like lightning or something to that effect, you get Rs. 3,000.” Interestingly, there was a person who was a tribal villager who could not read; and found – he did not know what Rs. 3,000 is and he went to get his money and he was given Rs. 300. I went with him one day and said this guy is supposed to get Rs. 3,000, not Rs. 300. Because I was from America and was able to say this that he is supposed to get Rs. 3,000, it was changed. Never since that day there has been a short-change by the Government. These changes happen because people know what they are doing, they have seen the differences.



To let you know all a little bit more about, what I represent, I represent a programme called INDICORPS. It is an organization that basically is asking NRIs around the world – currently it is just the US and Canada – but next year we are launching for the rest of the world to come back to India and spend six months or a year doing something, dedicated service at the grassroots level and make this change happen. This is how it is going to happen. It cannot be by talking about certain things in bits and pieces. It hurts me when somebody says to me that look at the dirty India, look at the corrupt India, look at the regulatory problems, etc. We have respect in this country. Unfortunately or fortunately, we have their respect. Use that respect; use it. Come back here and clean the streets with your own hands; you challenge the corruption. Go and speak to these people about what these regulatory issues are. They have never come here as an American organization or a UK organization with regard to income-tax issues or other issues. Then, they go with each other. If you come here and show them that this is the process I am going through and trying to set up an entity, and trying to set up a trust, and this is the problem; I have to be all over here and I have to get these income-tax regulations, see this minister, etc. That is ridiculous. It is because they have never seen that, or they have never done it.

If you come here and show them that these are the issues, then of course we can have a good change. One person can make a difference. One person is you. You can revolutionize India, you can revolutionize the way this place works. But you have to become the centre for that change. India needs a lot of things. It needs a lot of things to be changed but what India needs most is people like you, to come back here and make that happen. Then, you go.

Address by Mr Dalpat Rathod, President, Fiji-Indian Business Council, Fiji

Thank you, Pradeep. Now, when you look at the watch, by this time the session might already been over. Anyway, the subject is very clear now – networking for effectiveness. Whatever discussions we had for two days, until now, how do we put these in practice. Until we get the results of this grand gathering, by the time we meet next year, will be the barometer on which the future progress of this Indian diaspora organization will depend. I know there is a shortage of time and we have to attend another function. I have all my panellists and I want to give them the time. But before doing that, I just want to take the discussion a bit further because I have got some issues which I would like to tell and I want to tell them now before I get no time to say so.

So far, the focus is, it looks like, trying inwards, overseas diaspora helping India. I want to take it in a different context now. The expectations, aspirations and consensus of diasporic member-countries vary and smaller countries like Fiji, Trinidad & Tobago, Guyana, Surinam and other 12 underdeveloped countries need not be different from those of the affluent developed countries like USA, Canada, UK, etc. That is why I want to give a further dimension to the discussion. I know it is a bit too late. But I believe that this particular discussion also can have three categories of approach. What the hub country, India, can do for member-diasporic countries? What diasporic countries can do for hub-country, India - that is Bharat - and third, how diasporic member-countries can interact and help each other.

Why I say this is because smaller diasporic countries like Fiji and others – they need attention to. It is not only India; the diaspora has to be strong internationally and it must become a visible force. This is my own thinking. The only way it becomes a visible force is that diaspora, that we are talking about for which we have gathered here, becomes very effectively helping the smaller Indian diasporic countries where there is a greater need. All this philanthropic work is diverted to India only. We should have a different concept as well. You may imagine – in the smaller countries, the benefit of

getting any aid from the Indian diaspora, from the other countries will make a tremendous difference. The whole development of the small countries can go by leaps and bounds. So, the Indian diaspora can play a very active role in the development of smaller countries. So, I wanted to give this dimension so that you could give a thought to it.

The media plays a very important role in the dissemination of information and molding public opinion on an issue. So, maximum use of favourable media exposure through television, radio transmission and printed media is the single most crucial factor in deciding success or otherwise of any project or campaign. Therefore, it is most essential that All India Radio and Doordarshan television service must be able to reach throughout the world, especially at least to countries where the Indian diaspora has a strong presence. I give the example of Fiji. If China can do it, why not India? We have a Chinese TV, CCTV being presented on Fiji TV everyday, regularly, featuring their programmes. Why can India not do it? Why can the Doordarshan not approach the Fiji Government and get that exposure? It can make a big difference. The people in Fiji or in other developing countries where the Indian diaspora is, will know what India is and what India is doing and how it can help them, too.

Another thing is about the PIOs. The best way to strengthen global Indian diaspora is to ensure that PIOs are attracted to visit India and get the person feel about India. There are so many of PIO. I know there is a lot of concentration of NRIs. I am talking strictly from PIOs point of view. The second, third, fifth, sixth generation of PIOs have lost touch with India. How to attract them? There are two ways. There should be a minimum or nominal visa fees for PIOs. Why a PIO, five generations down, wants to visit India and he has to pay a high visa fee? Make it an attraction. Another thing is reduction in the PIO card. At the moment, I think, the cost of PIO card is high; I think it is about 300 US dollars. Why not reduce it to 100 US dollars? You have a 20-million- strong Indian diaspora. Even if you get 100 million diasporic members picking PIO cards, it will mean 100 million dollars' revenue for the Government of India. But that is not the only point. Those one-million-strong diaspora, PIOs coming to India, establishing a link, sentimental too – it will make a hell of a difference. The PIO also will be a potential tourist in India. These people have got some money there and they will come and spend the money. We have one million additional tourists; they are our own blood. They come and visit here. Once they know about India, they will be the strongest advocates of India and friends of India.

There is a need for a central diasporic fund like Lions International have one central fund which the member organizations, if and when they need it, money comes from that fund for help. Why not the diaspora create a central fund? Wherever there is a need, it can go. Suppose there is an earthquake or something here in India, that central diasporic fund can immediately send assistance. Likewise, it happens in any other country of the 110 countries where the Indians are, that organization can straightaway go and help. That is an area worth looking into.

Another one is – Air India must expand its network, I think, for the diaspora. India's presence in the air space in the world must now be seen and it must be a visible presence and Air India must become a national carrier of India and it is the most powerful, single, visible ambassador of India. This time, Air India regains its international character, it can straightaway go and help. That is an area worth looking into.

Thus Air India regains its international image as the Maharaja of India in the air space all over the world. The global Indian diaspora is quite ready to welcome and support Air India in all possible ways.

These are the few points I wanted to make. We have these three issues - increasing

information of government programmes, networking amongst the diaspora organizations, and partnerships with NGOs. The time is running out. What I want to do is I will invite all my panellists to come and give their views. In the end, I will have an opportunity to enlarge on what they say and wind up. May I now first ask Shrimati Komal Anand, Director General, CAPART to speak?

Thank you. I know, I have to wind up all these discussions with the recommendations to be made. I have got a lot of notes here. If I go through them I may be holding you for another 20 minutes. I think all ideas are recorded. We will try to put them in a format. Our rapporteur is doing all the hard work. I think we had obstruction and everything. But one resolution I would like to have specifically done today is - because the high-level Committee report has suggested that there is going to be a central organization with the Prime Minister being the ex-officio Chairman of that organization and there will be a Deputy Chairman who will be having a ministerial rank. He will be holding a ministerial position. That is a central apparatus and that will become a central organization with a lot of administrative back-up that it needs. Their job is to put up all regional diasporas on central line and State-wise also. So, there is a State network, the Central network and at the same time it will be their obligation to reach all the diasporic countries and try to formulate an advisory council in each country. Wherever we Indians are, if we see that there is one organization and it is whole and sole, we will have division. This advisory council will be the best approach and we will have feedback from the advisory council to this central body and all the bureaucratic problems in India have to be dispensed with. Otherwise, we will be talking the same language again and again every year. Thank God, we are going to meet again next year on 9th January.

Address by Ms Komal Anand, Director General, CAPART

Thank you. Mr Chairman, Mrs Ela Bhatt and Other Panellists and the Diaspora,

It is indeed a very great privilege to be with you today and to share with you these moments in which we gain and appreciate your desire to do something for your country, much as we are involved in the development of our country in our own way – whether it is in the civil service or whether it is outside the civil service. There are many Indians who are very committed for the development of our country.

I happen to represent, as the Director General of an organization called CAPART. It stands for the Council for Advancement of People's Action and Rural Technology. It was set up by the Government in 1986 under the Ministry of Rural Development and it is indeed a very unique institution and an innovation of the Government which is meant for strengthening the voluntary movement in the country. Its headquarters are in Delhi and we have nine regional centres in all parts of the country. Of course, one centre could represent five States for instance. It was established, as I said, in 1986 and it has so far extended the financial support to 9,000 organizations for implementing 21,000 grassroot projects involving an outlay of Rs.643 crore in collaboration with NGOs and voluntary organizations.

Since 1994, CAPART has embarked upon a process of decentralization and delegation; to think about greater efficiency, transparency and regional balance and its funding operations, by means of constituting some Committees which work in a decentralized way in Jaipur, Lucknow, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Guwahati, Chandigarh, Patna and Dharwar. As I said, CAPART is not just a funding agency. Its main areas of strength are that it is a national-level agency for coordinating efforts for promotion of appropriate technologies. It has a well-established library with a computerized information system, a web site and on-line connectivity with its regional offices. These and a variety of other factors including its national status, a well-established track record and Government recognition have placed CAPART in a very preeminent position

as implementing and addressing the problems of rural development through voluntary action.

Today, in CAPART we have introduction to 20,000 voluntary organizations and NGOs. Presently, CAPART is working through 4,000 NGOs in various parts of the country covering a very wide ambit of social welfare and developmental activities. The major schemes of this Council are – public cooperation which supports innovative schemes not covered by the Government. Projects under the scheme vary from organic farming, drought-proofing to micro-finance and disaster mitigation. We also have a drought-village scheme. To state briefly, I would like to say from CAPART that we are in a position to be a catalyst for the diaspora who would wish to contact us. We could put them on to many good organizations which are working and have a proven track record of many years. We could be a catalyst for you. We know the organizations. We would like you to deal directly with them, but we could introduce you to them in various ways – whether it is for rural development or for education or whether it is for disabilities or whether it is for disaster management. If you would be interested, I could circulate certain papers and we would be very happy if you contact us and very happy to be of assistance to you.

At the end, I would say that we very much appreciate the sentiments that you have for your country and we also reciprocate the same.

Thank you very much.

Address by Mr Rangan Dutta, Senior Consultant, Planning Commission

I speak for the Planning Commission. I thank the Chairman for giving me this opportunity. The Planning Commission is the nodal agency for the voluntary sector. Therefore, we have an overview of the situation.

Roughly, about Rs. 4,000 crore is annually being received from external sources to roughly about 1,700 to 1,800 voluntary organizations in this country. The Government system provides, according to our rough assessment, an equal amount of about Rs. 3,500 crore to Rs. 4,000 crore to the voluntary organizations. The charity part, that is donations from individual citizens, would be roughly about Rs. 8,000 crore to Rs. 10,000 crore. We have, in our country, according to our rough assessment, about 50,000 voluntary organizations actively involved in, what do you call, the social sector – education, health, literacy, rural development, rural technology, etc. Mrs Komal Anand has given you the idea of what CAPART is doing. There are several organizations in the country engaged in what do you call secular social development activities. I am not talking about organizations supporting activities connected with religion like helping people to visit centres of pilgrimage etc.

If you look at the voluntary sector as a whole, the money has not been a problem really. In fact, the good voluntary organizations in India have another problem. They approach all agencies to take up projects on their behalf as their hands are full. In that scenario, let me just add one basic information that essentially the problem has been to develop professionalism within this sector and to create capacity to take up innovative projects and to create core competences. These three are matters, according to us, which are pretty important.

As the nodal agency, we would like to get your recommendations to try to see that these issues are resolved. I have one or two more points. In India, we have a lopsided growth of voluntary organizations. There is a terrible regional imbalance. The voluntary organizations have concentrated largely in the South, in the East in Manipur and Mizoram. You will be surprised to know that the largest number of voluntary organizations in India are in the State of Manipur and next comes the State of Mizoram

which has a very large number of voluntary organizations. It is pretty strong in the Western India and in South, but terribly weak in Northern India and in Central India. So, this problem of regional imbalance has to be addressed by taking measures to promote growth of the voluntary sector in this region.

I come to some of the few issues which we are trying to sell to the voluntary sector. India needs capacity to deal with some of the strategic issues of development. I am talking of the rural sector basically. One is the issue of water scarcity. Second is food and nutritional support. This needs a little bit of explanation. Our womenfolk suffer from a serious problem of anaemia. More than the food in certain areas, the problems of child health and nutritional security are becoming more and more serious. I should have talked about this earlier. Then comes the issue of population stabilization. Finally, educational divide is taking place in the country. In my perception, we have a mathematical divide in the country. There are areas where people are strong in mathematics, and there are areas where people are weak. The areas where standards of teaching of maths are weak are lagging behind. In these activities, there is enormous scope for innovation. More than the money, we would be happy to get from the NRIs, from our Pravasi Bharatiyas, professional inputs of how to help the voluntary sector, how to create partnership. This brings me to the very last point that I will make. I suggest that instead of trying to set up organizations here on your own, you may like to tie up with about say 15,000 organizations that we have in our country. Let it be pretty good, very well-organized by other agencies.

We have a database in our Planning Commission and if you access it, you will get to know about 15,000 organizations in the country - how they are working, what are their areas of specialization, etc. I, therefore, plead for an increasing partnership of Pravasi Bharatiyas and our voluntary sector and the Planning Commission would be happy to help you in this regard.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Peter Patel, Chairman, Asian Health Forum, UK

Thank you, Chair. I am from Birmingham, United Kingdom. I need to go to another appointment side. I do not intend to, like my predecessors did give you a long lecture or anything. Again, I am actually going to say really something on my particular topic and if you read my abstract it was on challenges faced by diaspora organizations and that is what my abstract says. Our experiences are no different to what all of you have said and that is tabulated in that abstract. So, rather than repeating them I entirely and wholeheartedly agree with you. I am just going to make one simple statement, a major statement. As far as NRI organizations in UK and in USA are concerned, it should be recognized that the majority of these diaspora organizations are what we call non-charity industries. They are professional industries; they have never been trained; they have community people and that is what they have done. They have unpaid workers as volunteers.

Therefore, in terms of what I have heard from various people here, in summary, I can understand their frustrations and fears which are amply justified when they identify the statutory framework of this nation as bureaucratic, corrupt, slow, ineffective and consistently lacking openness in many issues. Today, we must recognize that these challenges are not insurmountable and there can be effective solutions providing immense benefit for social development by managing change to continue dialogue and partnership approach with the NRI voluntary sector. Let this not be, I repeat, let this not be the most expensive talk shop and do not let the networking develop into mutual appreciation society. The way forward is by setting up clear objectives, proper regulatory systems and support from the Government, sharing an expertise and partnership.

Thank you.

**Address by Mr Ram Gidoomal,
Philanthropist, Social Worker and Author and Chairman,
Winning Communications Pavilions Limited, UK**

Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. It is good to be here and I just liked the previous speaker say that my quotes are contained in the abstract which you all should have a copy of. Just two pieces of background that will put context to what I am going to say. I am part of a family business which has done business across the globe called *In Lakhs*. We have a foundation in Delhi. So, we do not just talk about it. There are things being done in terms of other aspects of the diaspora.

The point I would like to leave with you is this one-sixth of the globe is India. Is India getting her fair share? I want to give you three very quick points of how to measure effectiveness on whether we are getting our fair share or not. When I talk about fair share, I want to talk about fairness in terms of crossing ethnic divides. When the Kosovo crisis took place – you may think what has India got to do with Kosovo – I can tell you what it has got to do with Kosovo. People from here went out to Kosovo and the funds were mobilized from the United States, Europe and in other parts of the diaspora to raise money to be able to mobilize resources to go from India. So, India became a giver. I think, that is a very important point in your context.

The second point is when I visited India as a businessman, I saw slums for the first time in my life, as a businessman who has never been to India. I was born in Kenya because we migrated; after the Partition, the family fled being Hindus, on the wrong side of the border. We fled to East Africa. In East Africa, we were kicked out. At that time, we had British passports; so, we went to Britain. What did we do in Britain? We started businesses and this business, *InLakhs*, is another part of it, we reached a point where we needed fishes. So, I get plenty of fish. Part of my business took me to the slums. When I saw the slums I was devastated. I gave up my job, I retired and started a project called Christmas Cracker, mobilized 50,000 young people and raised over 10 million dollars, using media. Somebody said, use the media. We just used the media. A blackman from Jamaica runs a television programme, a fitness programme. He says, "Lose pounds, give Pounds". People lost pounds and gave pounds. We raised half a million pounds and built a hospital in Latur when the Maharashtra earthquake took place, again diaspora coming together.

My final point I will make is this – the diaspora helped me very much when I ran for Mayor of London. When I ran for Mayor of London, I got 1,00,000 votes. The British media would not cover me. They gave me very minimal coverage. People talked about all sorts of issues of discrimination. I faced it. Doordarshan sent a TV crew and followed my campaign and people were picking up my campaign here in India. I got a hundred thousand votes and beat all the minor parties. There was partnership between the diaspora and London to the shock of the main political parties in the United Kingdom. So, there is a whole lot of issues.

One final point I want to say is this – it is not just all about a mutual admiration society. Sometimes, there are painful issues and there is one painful issue which took place in Gujarat which affected our communities in England. The community started getting segmented on religious lines, exaggerated by what took place in Gujarat. So, as a diaspora community, we raised; we did a conference in London on August 15th and we called it Healing the Wounds. We brought fundamentalists who would not talk to one another. In fact, by organizing the Conference, my life was put under threat. I had to get police protection because people said, "My Goodness, will this be anti-Hindu, anti-Muslim, anti-Christian, and all that?"

I can tell you, by bringing people together in the diaspora we achieved a talking together that would not have happened otherwise and the healing process began for Healing the Wounds. So, the diaspora has a role to engage in human rights issues and

in exposing them, talking about them and not being afraid of them. I would urge you. I know many have left. These proceedings are being recorded and I can say it on the record that that conference raised the issues, like the lady raised. Where did the money go? The next day, the *Financial Times* of Great Britain took our conference and gave it a big spread saying – NRIs must watch where money goes because we need to know that they are not used by mischief-makers for their own ends which go against the grain of secularism and pulling together communities. And that is what we must do and that is my response to your question.

Thank you.

**Address by Mr J R Hiremath,
Former Ambassador and Member
of the High-level Committee on the Diaspora,
New Delhi**

Mr Chairman, I will try to be as brief as possible. We are all great admirers of Tie-the-Indus Entrepreneurs. As you know, they are venture capitalists who want to share in whatever successful enterprises have been launched by them. But here we are dealing with something called social venture capitalism where people invest in the welfare of other people without expecting any return, except the return of moral satisfaction.

Of course, it is a very important work that they do and we must admire what they are doing for us. Recently, after the earthquake in Gujarat two years ago, there were a lot of individuals who came out, camped out in tents and worked for the restoration of some element of normalcy for the people of Gujarat who had been affected by the earthquake. As the high-level Committee, of which I happen to be a member, was very very surprised one day, an old gentleman came to meet us and he said that he was the grandson of an Indian child labourer, but he had himself become a doctor; he had been with the World Health Organization and he had even been High Commissioner for Mauritius in Britain. He said he had come with one last desire that he had to go to his native village and do something to help the poor villagers. We were greatly moved by this gesture of generosity on his part.

Similarly, there was recently a report about two Canadians of Indian origin who went to their ancestral village of Kharaudi in Punjab and endowed it with civic amenities like street lights, underground sewage system and even a village square with a 20-foot clock tower, something unheard of in any village in India. There are many, many such instances of this kind which you will find in the chapter on philanthropy of the high-level Committee's report which has been distributed here.

Mr Chairman, I would like to mention here only that although there are a large number of NGOs in India, there is a lack of information about them and about their reliability and about their credibility. This is, of course, a very important factor because, as you know, the philanthropists abroad are chary about channelling their assistance through the governmental sector because of various reasons that we have been discussing earlier. But, on the other hand, how is one to know about the credibility of an organization? Very fortunately, two years ago, the Charities Aid Foundation, CAF, in cooperation, I believe, with the Planning Commission, undertook a very detailed study of a large number of Indian NGOs and on the basis of various criteria they had come out with a very interesting book which is called the Dimensions of the Voluntary Sector in India. In this, they have pointed out the actual performance of different NGOs and they have rated them on the basis of various criteria of performance. I think this would be a very useful source of information for foreign philanthropists who are looking for reliable NGOs with which to interact in India.

I would like to make a very small suggestion. It would be useful if a parallel organization

can be set up among the diaspora in various countries so that the Indian NGOs who are short of funds but who, at the same time, require to do things to supplement the insufficient governmental activity in certain areas like education and health in the rural sector, because these are the sectors which are the first casualties whenever there are financial constraints and budgetary cuts are imposed. Therefore, I would suggest that if there is a similar organization abroad in the various diasporic countries where we can have an exhaustive list of persons that can be approached by Indian NGOs who need some assistance, it would be good.

Mr Chairman, my last point is that there are in India many selfless individuals who are touched with a desire to improve the lots of the people who are less fortunate in themselves. Their capital is often in the form of perseverance and self-sacrifice combined with ingenuity. They do not trumpet their achievements, nor do they ask for recognition. But even unsolicited financial support would help to strengthen their hands and enhance their work. A magazine in Delhi, a weekly magazine, comes out every week with a small one-page account called *Making a Difference*. In this are chronicled moving tales of the work of many such persons in various parts of India. It is my earnest hope that the accounts of such experts would serve as an effective magnet for the diaspora's willing support.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Amod Kanth, Founder and Secretary General, Prayas

I did a very a wise thing earlier. Mr Vinod Khanna told me that you will get fleeting three seconds. But even if I get one hour there is nobody to listen. That is the problem here. Anyway, I did a wise thing; I circulated my note earlier which, I think, people have collected. The point I was trying to make, I do not think, will really go heard here because nobody is there to hear, but then the broad issue that I wanted to highlight was that there are three major sectors of development. The Government is striding over the entire activity – the corporate sector and the voluntary sector. But the voluntary sector galvanizes the individual efforts with the common public good. Social development, I have an understanding, connotes social economic developments, talks about children, women, elders, disabled; talks about health, education, women's empowerment, self-help groups, etc. These are the various areas of activities.

I am not talking about the expanse and the volume of the voluntary sector, except that Rs. 16,000 crore that goes into the voluntary sector in India, Rs. 4,000 crore is said to be FCRA remittance, but most of it is from the institutional bodies and not from the individuals. I wanted to exhort my friends from the diaspora as to what they could do. They could really contribute more. Money matters. Definitely, it matters. There are multiple innovative programmes and under these sectors of primary health, then education, women's empowerment, child development which could be taken up – I wanted to tell about them. This country is beset with a lot of problems. It needs to be thought of. For instance, India ranks, according to Human Development Indicators, at 119th still amongst 175 countries and that is something to be seen – 72 million people still are said to be under absolute poverty. These are various issues. There are 100 million people living in slums; 100 million children are not going to schools. These are very basic issues we need to understand and, perhaps, the diaspora community would do well to contribute towards them. The problems relate primarily to education, health, etc. where, I think, they need to really contribute.

I would like to exhort once again that children, being the most vulnerable, definitely have the first claim always. The UN Convention also makes it very clear that they have the first call on the humanity. So, since I represent an organization called Prayas which accesses about 50,000 children in Delhi, Gujarat and Dehat – I speak on their behalf and

I would like to say that apart from the fact that 100 million children do not go to schools in India, there are at least 40,000 schools which have no teachers in the country; 17 per cent schools do not have any buildings; majority of the schools do not have toilets; and majority of the children do not go to schools for the simple reason that there are no toilets for them. That is a very basic issue, they have to understand.

Similarly, in health and child protection sectors, there is a major problem. Now, the Government's budgeting is very important. I must point out because nearly 3.6 per cent of the total outlay of the budget is on education. Now, it has increased tremendously. Last time, it was just about 0.2 per cent on health and maybe 0.1 per cent on child protection. Perhaps, if the diaspora wants to do something effective, something worthwhile, they should come around to contribute in these sectors directly. There is no dearth of organizations. I do not think there is a need to create so many entities in India. Somebody pointed out - and it was pointed out by that gentleman-also the Planning Commission's representative said that 15,000 organizations have been credited to be good worthy of being used. I do not see the reason why should we create more organizations. The diaspora need not create them, they can well depend on the existing organizations.

These are some basic issues I thought I will mention. As per the organization, which I represent, we are concentrating on the areas of child trafficking, juvenile justice, child protection, and child development. We talk about shelter, health nutrition, recreation, all types of educational and vocational training programmes. These are certain areas. One last point I would like to say that the voluntary sector in India - this entire subject of social development - it has to come out as an alternative to a situation where Government is shrinking its activities. You understand that very well. The corporate sector, the business sector is driven by the market forces. They are more into profits. There is a need to create an alternative sector and that is, of course, voluntary sector for social development. If in the social development the voluntary sector is not coming forward to help, who else will do it? That is the basic issue.

I am sure that the contribution of the diaspora could be really remarkable. That is the point I am trying to make. I would like to emphasize towards the end that there has to be - I am only trying to help them to prioritize their issues. For instance, children have the first call. They should begin first.

Thank you.

Address by Mr Judge Anand Satyanand, New Zealand

Mr Chairman, I am a judge from Wellington, New Zealand. It may be that there is little enough comparison between India and New Zealand, but I am pleased to tell you that that is not correct. As a judge of more than a dozen years' standing, I am well used to speaking law. As a lawyer of long experience, I am used to the challenge of making telling points in a simple fashion. As a result of this afternoon's proceedings, I have two things to offer to this audience. The first is - I have written it down and it reads: clear information about processes. It seems to me that there is a very dire need given what has transpired here this afternoon. I offer for consideration after this Conference is analyzing what is correct, the notion of freedom of information legislation. New Zealand is one of the countries in the world which has freedom of information legislation and that kind of legislation can ensure simple, transparent procedures and it can ensure that things are understood and that the bureaucracy is accountable for its action.

The second thought which I have to offer is that there should be regular exchanges of information and it seems to me that a country like New Zealand which has experience

of exchanges of monies and exchanges of things in kind with people in need in countries in the Pacific, that New Zealand has experiences to share with organizations in this country. There are, for example, things that the law can be made to work to distinguish between donations made in cash and donations made in kind. There are experiences to offer about things which are provided by international organizations such as Rotary International.

Mr Chairman, I realize the time is short. I have, of course, abandoned the speech that I was going to make. But I think that I can responsibly offer to this audience that it is three-folds – the benefit of clear information about processes being provided by the Government in the others' responsibility and secondly let there be exchanges of such information. I propose to end this by saying nothing more other than to offer respects and greetings to this Conference from a small country of not more than four million people, but which has 60,000 members of the diaspora. I can assure you that I am interested in the matters which are under discussion here and in particular the discussion which has been the subject of this afternoon's deliberations. I thank you.

Address by Ms Lakshmi Venkateswaran

It is always good to give the lady the last word, so thank you. I will not even pretend that I have anything new to say, having heard three hours of debate. So, I will just make an appeal at least on record even if there are not too many people to listen to the appeal, but the whole idea is I think what the INDICORPS young man said ran very true; because even in the business world people are talking about economies of scale of getting together, networking in order to be more effective. Somehow, we need to make that happen and I think a lot of talk about good governance is happening in the area of the voluntary sector as well as building economies of scale, effective operations and implementation.

I think Mr Amod Kanth mentioned that very well also. After hearing all the debates here, it seems to me that on the diaspora side there is a lot of frustration and concern about how to enter and how to be effective. As Priya was saying, there is a lot of frustration and concern on the Indian side as to how do we access what we need to access from the diaspora. I frankly do not understand why there is frustration on both sides and we are trying to solve the problem independently instead of saying first we need to come together. So, if the Indian side of the NGOs and all of those who are working in the civil society, first need to find the right partner on that side and similarly the diaspora needs to find a partner. Maybe as a partnership, we can attack the problems whether it is of regulations, whether it is of implementation and so on better by each group trying to do it independently. So, the whole idea is that if we can say partnership should be the way to go, so that the diaspora in turn feels that what they have the core competence in, they can offer it without going through the frustration and the Indian side can feel that they can do what they need to do to access that. Then, partnership should be the way to go.

Thank you.

Address by Mr K C Johri, Chairman and Trustee of the Eco-Development Foundation

I am Chairman and Trustee of the Eco-Development Foundation. My address is there in the information given. I want to say one thing. Having listened to all, I am not going to defend the indefensible, that is the bureaucrats. I use the word public servants. So, there is no debate between the public servants and the NGOs. The NGOs are the partners of the Government. It was just suggested that. In some countries in Europe, I

am told, as much as 40 to 60 per cent budget is allotted to the NGOs, to spend through them and, therefore, I would urge the Central Government and the State Governments to consider it very seriously. They can check our credentials. Of course, one has to bow down. There was some proof that there is corruption and all that. Let us agree that everybody is corrupt. But still one is to follow certain rules.

Therefore, these are the only two points I would like to make. We are focussing on the welfare through education and in the Indian Constitution it is the responsibility of the State. It is a gigantic task. The Government of India started during Rajiv Gandhi's time that "I will make 500 Doon schools"; meaning thereby that there is nothing wrong with the residential – British system of public school. The only thing is that accessibility is not there.

So, with these words, may I propose a vote of thanks to all those, Mr Gujral and others, who are very busy people and particularly our guests from abroad from all over the globe and to the panellists who took all the trouble and, therefore, all of us. Thank you very much, Sir, for bearing with us with our outbursts of anger, but it is all in good faith. You are our guest and so are we your guests, a global family.

Mr Krishan Khanna

I represent the *Times of India* group, Times Foundation. In fact, I was supposed to be one of the panellists. But they put me in the wrong group – they put me in the film group. Actually, I wanted to make an important announcement. It is like this – there is a big problem of credibility. Ms Priya Viswanath mentioned it and some others mentioned it also. We in the Times Foundation would offer our services as an umbrella NGO, as an umbrella Foundation and we also would like to suggest that the moneys, if any, sent to us could also be audited either by PricewaterHouse or by KPMG or Kelloyds – whoever you want so that the donors would be satisfied that at least 90 per cent of their money, 85 to 90 per cent, is being used for the purposes for which it was given. This is the first information I would like to pass on to you.

The other thing is that we are working on three very critical areas. One is on literacy. We have a programme in which we can teach people to read and write in 40 hours. We have got Hindi, Marathi, Tamil, Telugu and the work is going on. It costs about Rs. 3 crore to Rs. 4 crore to make one language. But we will not charge you; whoever are the people in India who want to use this, they can get it through us free of cost. There is no cost involved to them. Cost has already been incurred. States like Bihar will take 147 years, as per UNDP, to get literate. We will have to meet another 147 times in so many lifetimes ahead before Bihar becomes literate. This country is not going to go anywhere if we cannot have even primary literacy. One of the reasons why China has gone ahead is that their primary literacy is around 92 per cent.

Mr Dalpat Rathod

Can you say 40 hours will be for basic thing?

Mr Krishan Khanna

In 40 hours, you can read the newspaper and you can write a few sentences to your dear ones. This CD is available. I will give you a copy of my booklet. The other area which we are working on is vocational training. We have tied up with the world's largest and the oldest NGO, which is 124 years old. It is in the UK. It is called City and Guilds. They train one million people a year in 103 countries and they have about 1,400 vocations.

As you know, the present college education in India is absolutely redundant. It is only meant to create more babus for the Government. It is a tragic situation because the youngsters, like zombies, go to junior colleges after high school and then from there they go to colleges and then they do M.Sc. or M.Com., or B.Com., or whatever. They have no skills. In today's 21st century with globalization, you cannot even get a carpenter in India. You have 400 million unemployed people. That is another area we are working. I will not mention other areas because they are of minor importance. But literacy and vocational training are important. The other things are there; I will give you the papers.

Mr Dalpat Rathod

| Yes, vocational training is the basic one.

Mr Krishan Khanna

| The main thing is that we would like to act as an umbrella. If you wish you can use our services. We do not charge for it.

Mr Dalpat Rathod

| Thank you very much.

| I think we had a lot of important discussion coming up at the right end of the session where we got no audience. But this session would have achieved more if we had been placed first.

Delegate

| Can I ask you one question? In 50 years, India is independent now. Two years ago, Mr Naidu was there in New York city and I was invited as a guest. I asked him the question – why till now we have not changed the name, India to Hindustan? Why India?

Mr Dalpat Rathod

| Or Bharat whatever it is.

Delegate

| It was Britishers who changed this name. Why India? Why it has not been changed so far?

Mr Dalpat Rathod

| Yes, this should have been changed.

Delegate

| Like Bombay becoming Mumbai etc. Are we totally blind to this? This is what the question is.

Mr Dalpat Rathod

| That is one more recommendation. I will consider it. Thank you.

| Thank you everyone, ladies and gentlemen. There is nothing to close. It is automatically closed. Thank you everyone for your patience.